

## Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 SAM-01 CU-02 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 CIEP-01 /103 W

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R 221045Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5127

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, PFOR, PGOV, PINT, SHUM, SN

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER LEE SPEAKS OUT ON NON-ALIGNMENT AND  
SINGAPORE'S INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

1. DURING ONE OF HIS OCCASIONAL INTERVIEWS WITH FOREIGN PRESS REPRESENTATIVES, PRIME MINISTER LEE DELIVERED HIMSELF OF SOME STRAIGHTFORWARD VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS. FOR MOST PART LEE REITERATED WELL KNOWN POSITIONS BUT SOME NUANCES STRIKE US AS NOTABLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE ON NON-ALIGNMENT, EVEN IF THEIR IMPLICATIONS ARE NOT READILY APPARENT. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (PROBABLY NOT COMPLETE) CARRIED BY APRIL 22 STRAITS TIMES AND REFLECTS VIEWS EXPRESSED BY LEE ON APRIL 2 TO SAFA HAERI OF IRANIAN NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION. MAIN POINTS FOLLOW:

2. BALANCE OF POWER IN SEA. LEE SAID REGION IS IN TRANSITION TO NEW, AS YET UNCERTAIN, BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN US, SOVIET UNION AND GRADUALLY, OVER TIME, PRC. HE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT FRIENDLY  
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OVERTURES OF ASEAN COUNTRIES TO INDOCHINESE COUNTRIES HAD NOT

BEEN RECIPROCATED. HOWEVER, HE WAS UNWILLING TO ANTICIPATE DANGERS INDOCHINESE ECONOMIC COMPETITION COULD HAVE FOR ASEAN (WHICH HE CONSIDERS IMPLAUSIBLE FOR AT LEAST 10 YEARS DUE TO REQUIREMENTS OF RECONSTRUCTION) SINCE BIG POWER BALANCE IN REGION WOULD HAVE BEEN ALTERED BY THAT TIME. LEE OBSERVED THAT, AFTER VIETNAM, IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT AMERICAN TROOPS TO INTERVENE IN THE INSURGENCY PROBLEMS OF ANY COUNTRY IN ASIA, AFRICA "OR EVEN MAYBE LATIN AMERICA."

3. NON-ALIGNMENT. LEE REPEATED STANDARD GOS VIEW THAT SINGAPORE, AND BY IMPLICATION ASEAN, SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN SUPER-POWER CONFLICTS. ON OTHER HAND, LEE STATED THAT SUCH INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE UNAVOIDABLE IF ONE'S OWN SURVIVAL IS INVOLVED. LEE ASSERTED THAT WHEN ONE'S SURVIVAL OR FUTURE IS THREATENED, IT WOULD BE "IMPOSSIBLE TO BE DISPASSIONATE AND NEUTRAL AND NON-ALIGNED."

4. WESTERN TYPE DEMOCRACY AND ITS APPLICABILITY TO SINGAPORE. LEE SAID PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AS PRACTICED IN EUROPE AND US COULD NOT BE TRANSFERRED IN TOTO TO THIRD WORLD. SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE SUITABLY MODIFIED, TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS OF EACH COUNTRY. PERHAPS IN REFERENCE TO THAILAND, LEE OPINED THAT ANARCHY PREVAILS WHERE THERE ARE 20 OR 30 PARTIES WHOSE MEMBERS REPRESENT INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS AND NOT THOSE OF PARTY. LEE ASSERTED IT IS NECESSARY TO FIND BALANCE BETWEEN COMPLETE STIFLING OF DISSENT AT ONE EXTREME AND RENDING OF SOCIAL FABRIC AT OTHER. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, LEE MAINTAINED PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY HAD IMPERFECTLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE WITHOUT NEGLECTING INTERESTS OF COUNTRY. DISSENTING GROUPS SHOULD BE ACCOMMODATED PROVIDED THE INTERESTS OF COUNTRY ARE NOT NEGLECTED.

COMMENTING ON GOS' EDUCATION POLICY, LEE DENIED THAT HE HAD EVER SAID OR EVEN WANTED A GENERATION OF YOUNGSTERS WHOSE VIEWS WOULD BE IDENTICAL TO THOSE OF THE GOVERNMENT. LEE SAID SUCH CONFORMITY WOULD MOREOVER BE OUT OF QUESTION IN AN OPEN SOCIETY SUCH AS EXISTS IN SINGAPORE. DISSENTING VIEWS WOULD BE TOLERATED PROVIDED THOSE WHO ESPOUSE THEM WERE SINCERE IN WANTING TO IMPROVE ON THE SYSTEM.

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6. RELATIONS WITH IRAN. NOT SURPRISINGLY, LEE FORSAW A ROSEY ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR IRAN. REFERRING TO HIS EXCHANGE OF VISITS WITH THE SHAH IN 1974-75, LEE STATED THAT DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING FORWARD CONCERNING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES, AN AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IRANIAN BANK IN SINGAPORE. HOLDRIDGE

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